

# The INFORMANT

The Kansas City Missouri Police Department

## MOU will provide transit officers

A new agreement with the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA) will assign two full-time officers to ensure the safety of those who use and drive buses.

Chief Darryl Forté and KCATA Chief Executive Officer Robbie Maniken signed the Memorandum of Understanding in January, and both organizations' boards of commissioners approved it. The KCATA will pay the salary, benefits and equipment costs for two officers, as well as pay for two patrol cars for them.

"The ATA's core value is to protect our drivers and our riders," Maniken said. "... We reached out to KCPD about having two officers who can directly patrol our service delivery area in Kansas City."

The patrols will begin as soon as the officers are selected. They will work out of the Central Patrol Division Footbeat Section. Major Scott Glaeser of the Patrol Bureau said a selection process will begin shortly. Because of the number of riders with mental illness who use the bus system, the KCATA requested the selected officers have Crisis Intervention Team training, according to the MOU. Officers will patrol bus stops and routes and respond to any incident involving a KCATA bus.

"Our partnership with KCPD has always been strong, and it's getting stronger," Maniken said.

Indeed, Kansas City Police off-duty officers have worked with KCATA since at least the late 1990s, said Sergeant John Frazier, who has coordinated the program since that time. Thirty-nine officers currently work off-duty for the KCATA in a variety of capacities. Some patrol the large transit hub at 10<sup>th</sup> and Main during morning and evening rush hours. Others patrol bus stops where crime has been an issue. They ensure security at the indoor station at 39<sup>th</sup> and Troost, where officers pay particular attention to keeping the children in the adjacent Operation Breakthrough childcare center safe. Other off-duty officers ride the buses, some



**Nearly 40 off-duty officers, such as Officers Christopher Lein and Curtis Edde above, currently provide security along bus routes and on buses. In a new agreement, the KCATA will fund two full-time transit police officers from KCPD.**

in uniforms and some covertly in plain clothes. The most common issue they deal with is fare disputes, Sergeant Frazier said. Depending on availability, off-duty officers work most days from the morning until the buses stop running around 1 a.m.

"The majority of people who ride the bus are very well-behaved," Sergeant Frazier said. "They love seeing the police. The drivers love seeing the police."

But for those who don't behave, KCPD will be there. Maniken said he hopes the on-duty transit officers will complement the off-duty program, providing officers who are regularly assigned to devote their efforts to bus driver and rider safety. He

said this is the first time KCPD has assigned full-time officers to KCATA, and he expects it will lead to quicker response times and enhanced feedback.

Because the KCATA operates across the entire Kansas City metropolitan area, Maniken said he and his staff will evaluate how the program is working in Kansas City to determine whether and how to expand it to law enforcement agencies in neighboring jurisdictions. The KCPD officers only will work in Kansas City, Mo.

The addition of full-time transit police officers is one of a number of things the KCATA is doing to enhance safety, Maniken said. They've undergone a reorganization to emphasize safety, implementing everything from partitions to conflict resolution training for drivers.

This may not be KCPD's only foray into public transit. The Department also is in discussions with the City of Kansas City about how officers will work with the streetcars that are expected to start running in late spring.

**Pg. 2** Retirees and FOP Lodge 99  
Horse Faulkner Retires

**Pg. 3** TAC Team makes it to 50 years

**Pg. 4** Officially Speaking  
Upcoming Events



# Retirees now can join FOP Lodge 99

For the first time, Kansas City Missouri Police retirees can be a part of the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 99.

Lodge 99 began opening up membership to department retirees this past summer. More than 150 retirees have been voted in during the past three months.

"The response has been incredible," said FOP Lodge 99 President Sergeant Brad Lemon. "We expect we will have 300 to 400 retired members by the end of 2016."

FOP lodges all over the country already include strong retiree memberships.

"Lodge 99 has been incredibly busy with contract negotiations, a healthcare lawsuit, creating the only known Civilian Bargaining Board and finishing our building renovations. Now that things have settled down a little, our lodge began contacting retirees and talking to them about joining," said Lemon. But Lemon said before Lodge 99 could fully implement their communication phase with the retirees, he was contacted by Retired Captain Glenn Cherry, President of the Retirees' Association.

Retired Captain Cherry said he was concerned that the Association in its current form did not have the financial resources to continue.

"One reason our relationship with our retired members is so important, is to help support the Retirees' Association," Lemon said.

After meeting several times with the Retiree's Association Board, they came up with a process to pay for the Retirees' Association's two major yearly social functions and to help improve their financial



**Pictured left to right: FOP past (and present) Presidents Tim Smith, Mike Stuart, Vern Wilson, President Sergeant Brad Lemon and Past President Master Detective Ron Orr all enjoyed the FOP Lodge 99 Open House on Jan. 22.**

status.

On top of that, Lodge 99 also will pay the yearly dues to the Retiree's Association for each retired member that joins the FOP, reduce FOP dues for most retirees and offer any retiree 65 and older a free membership. Surviving spouses also can be voted in as an associate member for free.

"Lodge 99 is committed to represent our membership, from recruit to retiree," Lemon said.

Retirees have full membership status, and as such, can run for any office and vote on all issues brought before the

membership, except contracts with the Board of Police Commissioners.

"The retirees will be able to provide our lodge with historical perspective on issues with the state and the city," Lemon said. "We also hope that they can provide assistance in Jefferson City to help lobby for issues important to the membership."

Lemon says Lodge 99 welcomes all retirees, including those who were not a member at the time of their retirement. Retired Chief Larry Joiner was just voted in at a recent membership meeting.

Lemon asked recent retirees to consider supporting and joining their association.

Diversifying the membership of the associa-

tion is not new to Lodge 99. They are the only known FOP lodge that has created a Civilian Bargaining Unit.

**"Lodge 99 is committed to represent our membership, from recruit to retiree."**

**- Sergeant Brad Lemon  
FOP Lodge 99 President**

## Mounted Patrol horse Faulkner retires



Faulkner retired Dec. 9 after 7 years on the force with the Mounted Patrol Section. He's a 19-year-old Hanoverian Thoroughbred. He is going back to the woman who donated him in 2008, Shannon Piepergedes, where he will reunite with his former pasture-mate. He will keep bowing.



# Tactical teams mark 50 years at KCPD

**F**ifty years ago on Valentine's Day, one of the department's longest-lasting specialty units started operation.

The first 38 officers to be assigned to the Tactical Enforcement Unit reported to the old police academy at 4042 Indiana to begin their training on Feb. 14, 1966.

"It was an exciting situation," said Park Kaestner, who was one of the Unit's charter members. He retired from KCPD as a detective in 1985 after 27 years of service.

Former Chief Clarence Kelley wanted such a unit in Kansas City after the Los Angeles Police Department started one.

"It was a unit that was needed for the community, and it did the job right," said William Ponessa, one of the first sergeants assigned to the unit. He retired from KCPD as a major in 1985.

The first members were hand-picked for the assignment, and they trained at local military bases. They soon became so well-known and respected that members taught other police departments across the country how to develop their own tactical teams. Ponessa said the unit's sergeants event went to the FBI National Academy to instruct the police leaders in attendance there about KCPD's successful tactical unit.

According to Ponessa and Kaestner, the unit did a great deal of surveillance (Kaestner recalled a lengthy investigation into the "black mafia"), Operation 100s (armed, barricaded person situations), worked with the Secret Service to protect visiting presidents, provided security at Chiefs games that took place at the old Municipal Stadium at 18<sup>th</sup> and Brooklyn, and worked closely with federal agents in the FBI and what is now known as the Drug Enforcement Administration by serving search warrants.

"It was first organized as a group of crime-busters," Ponessa said. "We were assigned to unmarked cars, which was the first time that happened, and assigned to bad areas to look for bad guys and gals. And we proceeded through the city combatting crime like you wouldn't believe."

Major James Connelly of the Tactical Enforcement Division said today's tactical teams do several of the same things, but some things are different. Forty-seven people are currently assigned to the division. Surveillance is mostly left to other units, now, but they will as-



**Above: Sergeant Charles Hockemeier and Officer Park Kaestner on the Tactical Unit's armored personnel carrier in 1970. Below: 1967 Informant clipping of the Unit's first Anniversary party. Photos provided by Park Kaestner.**



sist when needed. Today's tactical officers, are charged with serving search warrants, fugitive apprehension assistance, negotiator responses and dignitary protection. They also provide training to schools, business and other organizations about how to secure their facilities and what to do in the case of an active shooter situation – something that few thought about 50 years ago. They also patrol high-crime areas, assist with police funerals and provide color guards.

One thing hasn't changed. After listing what their Tactical Units did/do, both Kaestner and Major Connelly concluded by saying, "Whatever the other units needed or didn't want to do."

Ponessa said negotiator response was a big part of the original Tactical Unit. In a predecessor to today's Crisis Intervention Team training, members learned from top psychologists how to handle people in mental crisis, even visiting inpatient psychiatric facilities to learn.

For Ponessa, his most memorable moment on the Tactical Unit occurred on 87<sup>th</sup> Street in the late 1960s. A man holed up in a house there had shot three police officers and kept retreating to rooms where tear gas wouldn't reach him. Using the armored personnel carrier given to them by the U.S. Army, Ponessa and his men were able to rescue the wounded officers (all survived) and tore into the front of the house. After the tank plowed through his walls, the man ran to a room where tear gas could get him, and police were able to get him safely into custody. Ponessa said the unit went to great lengths to avoid shooting suspects.

Kaestner said the Unit rigged those armed personnel carriers up

to suit their needs, including creating the ability to deploy tear gas from it. It also was a hit at parades. The unit members referred to the carrier as "The Love Bug." One of the carriers was restored a few years back by the Kansas City Police Historical Society.

The original Tactical Unit was headquartered at the Scottish Rite Temple at Linwood and Paseo.

The current Tactical Enforcement Division will mark the 50-year anniversary with a group photo to be published in next month's Informant.

## Upcoming Events

February 9  
Board of Police  
Commissioners Meeting

February 11  
25-Year Ring Ceremony

March 4  
Police Foundation Call  
For Backup Event

March 8  
Board of Police  
Commissioners Meeting

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## Officially Speaking

### Awards

#### *Special Unit Citation*

Officer Christopher DeFreece  
Officer Bobbie King  
Officer Edward Morales  
Officer Justin Palmer

#### *Life-Saving Award*

Officer Nicholas Martinez

#### *Meritorious Service Award*

Captain Michael Hicks

#### *Certificate of Commendation*

Detective Jason Findley  
Detective Chase Moraczewski  
Officer Robert Murphy  
Officer Ryan Taylor

### Obituary

Retired Sergeant Gerald Fortney

### 25-Year Ring

Sergeant Anthony Sanders

The mission of the  
Kansas City Missouri  
Police Department  
is to protect and serve  
with professionalism,  
honor and integrity.